

So we're honored to be with you. We're proud to be with you on this important national holiday. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. Jack, glad you're here. Appreciate you all taking time out of your day to visit with us.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:42 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Adrian M. Fenty of Washington, DC; and Jack Evans, councilmember, Council of the District of Columbia.

Remarks to March for Life Participants

January 22, 2008

Nellie, good to be with you. We're fellow west Texans who care deeply about the value of human life. Other members of the board of directors for the March for Life, leaders of the pro-life community, and all those who are here with us for the march, it's good to have you here, and welcome to the White House.

As I look out at you, I'll see some folks who have been traveling all night to get here. *[Laughter]* You're slightly bleary-eyed. *[Laughter]* I'll see others who are getting ready for a day out in the cold. But mostly I see faces that shine with a love for life.

I see people with a deep conviction that even the most vulnerable member of the human family is a child of God. You're here because you know that all life deserves to be protected. And as you begin your march, I'm proud to be standing with you.

Thirty-five years ago today, the United States Supreme Court declared and decided that under the law, an unborn child is not considered a person. But we know many things about the unborn. Biology confirms that from the start, each unborn child is a separate individual with his or her own genetic code. Babies can now survive outside the mother's womb at younger and younger ages. And the fingers and toes and beating hearts that we can see on an unborn child's ultrasound come with something that we cannot see, a soul.

Today, we're heartened—we're heartened by the news that the number of abortions

is declining. But the most recent data reports that more than one in five pregnancies end in an abortion. America is better than this, so we will continue to work for a culture of life where a woman with an unplanned pregnancy knows there are caring people who will support her, where a pregnant teen can carry her child and complete her education, where the dignity of both the mother and child is honored and cherished.

We aspire to build a society where each one of us is welcomed in life and protected in law. We haven't arrived, but we are making progress. Here in Washington, we passed good laws that promote adoption and extend legal protection to children who are born despite abortion attempts. We came together to ban the cruel practice of partial-birth abortion. And in the past year, we have prevented that landmark law from being rolled back.

We've seen the dramatic breakthroughs in stem cell research that it is possible to advance medical science while respecting the sanctity of life. Building a culture of life requires more than law; it requires changing hearts. And as we reach out to others and find common ground, we can see the glimmerings of a new America on a far shore. This America is rooted in our belief that in a civilized society, the strong protect the weak. This America is nurtured by people like you, who speak up for the weak and the innocent. This America is the destiny of a people whose founding document speaks of the right to life that is a gift of our Creator, not a grant of the state.

My friends, the time is short, and your march is soon. *[Laughter]* As you give voice to the voiceless, I ask you to take comfort from this: The hearts of the American people are good. Their minds are open to persuasion. And our history shows that a cause rooted in human dignity and appealing to the best instincts of the American people cannot fail. So take heart.

Take heart, be strong, and go forth. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 a.m. in the East Room at the White House for later broadcast to march participants on the National Mall in Washington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to

Nellie J. Gray, president, March for Life Education and Defense Fund. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders

January 22, 2008

I want to thank the leaders for coming. I initially intended to brief the leaders of the House and the Senate on my trip to the Middle East, and I intend to do so. But we're going to spend some time talking about this economy and the need for us to find common ground for an effective pro-growth economic package. We had a good call last Thursday, and I want to thank the Speaker and the leader and other Members. And Secretary Paulson had a good meeting today.

I believe we can find common ground to get something done that's big enough and effective enough so that an economy that is inherently strong gets a boost to make sure that this uncertainty doesn't translate into more economic woes for our workers and small-business people.

And so I really want to thank you all for coming, and I'm looking forward to our discussions. And—look, there's a—everybody wants to get something done quickly, but we want to make sure it gets done right and make sure that we're—everybody is realistic about a—the timetable. Legislative bodies don't move as—necessarily in an orderly, quick way. And therefore, these leaders are committed, and they want to get something done. But we want to make sure we're realistic about how fast that can possibly happen. And so when we say, “as soon as possible,” that means within the—obviously within the ability of these bodies to effectively do their jobs.

So I have got reasonable expectations about how fast something can happen, but I also am optimistic that something will happen. And I appreciate very much the leadership being here today. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Remarks on the President's Advisory Council on Financial Literacy

January 22, 2008

I appreciate members of my Cabinet joining me today with some of our citizens who care about the future of our country and are willing to do something about it. Earlier today I signed an Executive order establishing the President's Advisory Council on Financial Literacy. I have asked people from the business world, the faith world, the non-profit world to join this council in order to come up with recommendations as to how to better educate people from all walks of life about matters pertaining to their finances and their future.

Chuck Schwab is the Chairman of this group, and John Hope Bryant is the Vice Chair. These two men have agreed to take time to take the lead, and I appreciate it.

You know, it's interesting that if we want America to be as hopeful a place as it can be, we want people owning assets. We want people investing. We want people owning homes. But, oftentimes, to be able to do so requires literacy when it comes to financial matters. And sometimes people just simply don't know what they're looking at and reading. And it can lead to personal financial crises, and that personal financial crises, if accumulated to too many folks, hurts our country.

One of the issues that many of our folks are facing now are these subprime mortgages. I just wonder how many people, when they bought a subprime mortgage, knew what they were getting into. The low interest rates sounded very attractive, and all of a sudden, that contract kicks in, and people are paying high interest rates. One of the missions is to make sure that when somebody gets a financial instrument, they know what they're getting into; they know what they're buying; they understand.

We want people to own assets. We want people to be able to manage their assets. We want people to understand basic financial concepts and how credit cards work and how credit scores affect you, how you can benefit from a savings account or a bank account. That's what we want. And this group of citizens has taken the lead, and I really thank them—thank you a lot.